

THE Mon Forum

News, Report, Analysis and Activities on Human Rights Situation in Mon Territory

ISSUE NO. 2/2021 | JUNE 2021

THE PUBLICATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND

ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY, THE HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND CONDEMNS THE FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT OF CIVILIANS IN BURMA WITH RELEASE OF BRIEFING PAPER ON HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



June 20, 2021

Internal displacement in Burma has forced hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee for their lives from state-sponsored abuses by the military. On World

Refugee Day, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), calls for an immediate end to human rights violations persecuted against the people of Burma. Our latest briefing paper, '*Displacement on the Rise: A Crisis in Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi Region*,' documented a climate of fear cultivated by the junta, leading to a dramatic increase in the internal displacement of civilians across the country. HURFOM strongly condemns the escalation of violence. (Download [the briefing paper in PDF](#))

On World Refugee Day, HURFOM is reminded of Burma's history, which over the last seven decades has been marred by violence by the Burma Army. Their onslaught led to the establishment of nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border where hundreds of thousands traumatized survivors sought safety. Ethnic people have long

[Read more on page2>>](#)

WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED AREAS (7-13 JUNE 2021)

WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED AREAS
7-13 JUNE

A weekly update by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) on the situation on the ground. Summary data includes Mon State, Karen State and Dawei.



Total Arrested & Detained: 1,372+
Total Injured: 222+
Total Killed: 41

These numbers are based on reports from the media, HURFOM staff, network members and civil society organizations starting from 7 February 2021. The total numbers may vary.

[Read more on page11>>](#)

MILITARY COUP IS A DARK CHAPTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA



April 7, 2021

HURFOM: The February-1 military coup has pulled Burma back into the past of more than 3 decades ago and opened a dark chapter for human rights in the country. Upholding basic human rights was a struggle under the civilian

government, but now with brutal killings taking place in the streets on a regular basis, human rights has hit rock bottom under the military junta.

In Mon State, the human rights situation is also deteriorating, with violations of fundamental human rights accelerating. There have been brutal killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, no right to information, restriction of movement, lack of protection to local businesses and a ban on the delivery of humanitarian aid.

1) Brutal killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions

[Read more on page2>>](#)

News

ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY, THE HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND CONDEMNS THE FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT OF CIVILIANS IN BURMA WITH RELEASE OF BRIEFING PAPER ON HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



been targeted by the regime for their culture and traditions as well as their resistance to live under the regime's occupation. Today is a testament to their ongoing strength and willful determination to live freely and peacefully in their home country. It saddens HURFOM that the current reality is not safe for their return.

Since seizing power in a coup on 1 February, the people of Burma have been forced to suffer deep-rooted consequences. Their livelihoods have been put on hold as the economic state of affairs spirals. In addition to increased militarization, warrantless arrests and property destruction, civilians have been forced to make difficult choices. In Mon State, Karen State and Tanintharyi region, civilians have been forced to flee for various reasons including being targeted by the regime for their anti-coup activities. Thousands have fled to escape violent conditions in their townships as well as to seek greater livelihood opportunities. HURFOM documentation suggests at least 41

have been killed, 1,372 arrested and detained and over 222 injured in our target areas since the coup.

HURFOM is deeply worried for the future of Burma. Innocent civilians should not be forced to carry the burden of war. Therefore, we call on the international community for urgent humanitarian assistance including food, water, and shelter for displaced populations. Further, donors and international agencies focusing on war-affected refugees and IDPs must recognize the work of local community-based service providers, organizations, and civil society groups trusted by the beneficiaries to coordinate an effective and efficient humanitarian response.

For more information:

Nai Aue Mon, HURFOM Program Director



KNU URGES THAI AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT REFUGEES



April 1, 2021

HURFOM: On March 30, 2021, the Karen National Union (KNU) released a statement urging the Royal Thai Government and the broader international community to provide shelter and humanitarian aid to refugees fleeing the situation in Myanmar.

The KNU has announced they have no alternative but to go to war against the Burmese military. The Feb 1 military coup and increasing violence being inflicted

on the people of Burma including the Karen peoples is leading to tens of thousands of refugees fleeing war.

In the evening of March 27, the Burmese military launched an airstrike that left 4 villagers dead and 8 injured in the community of Dae Pu Noe. 10,000 people have since fled to Thailand.

The KNU said the violence perpetrated by the Burmese military has destroyed the peace process and brought the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) to an end. The Burmese military has also invaded KNU controlled areas.

The KNU urged the international communities not to acknowledge the military junta as having any rightful claim to governance, and to stop all military and business ties.

The Karen National Liberation Army will fully protect the land and its people, according to the statement.

Decorative footer area with 'Inthisissue' and four news highlights: Military junta committed to imposing news blackout; Military junta must be held accountable for mass killings; Mon people's political destiny does not rest in the name given to a bridge; MUP candidate assassinated: Mon organizations concerned this was an act of political terrorism.

MILITARY COUP IS A DARK CHAPTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA



Since the February 1 military coup, 8 people from Mon State have been killed by the security forces. Half of the victims were young people under 25. There were also victims under the age of 18. Some of the victims were shot in the head.

“The boy didn’t participate in the protest. He was at a soft drink shop at home and then shot to death,” said an activist from Mawlamyine.

Kyaik Hto, Thaton and Paung Townships all have lost people and Mawlamyine has had 5 victims to date.

According to the data from HURFOM, there are about 500 detainees in the Mon, Karen and Dawei area of Southern Burma. Reporters have also been arrested.

“Residents were arrested without doing anything wrong. People are helpless. They have to run away when police and soldiers enter their ward,” reported a community member.

During the brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters, security forces are destroying motorbikes, shops and robbing people of their property.

“Yesterday, (the security forces) took goats, money and food from Thiri Myine Ward. That was the first time that the security forces were violent in the ward. It’s terrible,”said one activist.

2) No right to information

Since February 1, 2021, there have been 23 days of shut downs of mobile data services and no access to public wifi service for 21 days.

There have been daily restrictions to internet access (1am to 6:30am or

9am). This has been taking place for 51 days and blocks to some website pages have been in place for 62 days.

“The Internet shouldn’t be cut off in this situation. Now, the people do not know which information is right or wrong. Limiting access to the Internet leads to trouble. The most important thing is that we don’t know that people are marching in the streets. I am worried that there will be more rumors,” said a Mawlamyine resident.

On March 8, 2021, the military council abolished the broadcast licences of 5 local media agencies and banned them from using any broadcasting platform. This sanction has been followed up with security forces targeting reporters on the ground.

“When recording protests, the reporters must now be protected from the security forces. The reporters get no protection from the military junta and they are threatened by the security forces,” stated an official from the Southern Myanmar Journalist Network (SMJN).

As of March 20, 2021, 41 reporters have been arrested across Burma. 19 are still detained and 11 have been charged with violating article 505 (A) allegedly for ‘causing fear, spreading false news, agitating directly or indirectly a criminal offense against a government employee.’

3) Restriction of movements

“Now, right to freedom of movement is totally lost,” said a taxi driver from Ye Township.

Since February 1, soldiers and the police in Mon State routinely check vehicles and smartphones of passengers at the entrances to cities.

“They have been checking our phones and motorbikes so we dare not take our phone when going to the city. People are afraid to go downtown. There were about 15 policemen and soldiers at the gate. It makes me feel fearful,” said one resident.

Soldiers and the police check social media activity on the phones of those they detain seeking anything related to anti coup protests to justify arrests.

“On February 28, when coming to Thanbyzayat, my bike was stopped by a policeman at the gate nearby the junction of Pa Nga and Wel Ton Chaung. First, he forced me to open my bike’s tool box and then unlock my phone. He checked my Facebook account and photo gallery,” said another resident.

In addition to these acts of intimidating, armed forces personnel have tried to establish military bases at schools and hospitals. There have even been rumors the military is again using forced labor to carry military rations and supplies. ***“The rumor of the military again [forcing residents to become] unpaid porters has emerged every night. Some villagers are frightened and run away,”*** said a hundred household leader from Mudon Township.

In order to suppress civilians, the military revoked specific human rights sections (#5, #7, and #8)of “the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens” on February 13, 2021.

The military has also re-approved the Law of “Reporting overnight visitors” which was abolished by the NLD government. Newly appointed Ward/Village administrators have forced local people to report any visitors and threatened that if they fail to do so, they would be imprisoned for three years or fined 300,000 Kyat.

4) Lack of protection to local businesses

With the political situation becoming increasingly unstable, growing fears, armed forces wantonly killing, and/or beating residents and destroying property, businesses can not operate normally.

The military junta imposed a nightly curfew from 8 pm to 4 am in Mawlamyine, Kyaik Hto, Paung, Chaung Zone, Thanbyzayat and Ye

[Read more on page 4>>](#)

News



Townships of Mon State. There are now rumors military forces are arresting and extorting rubber plantation workers who try to travel to their plantations to tap rubber trees. Tapping requires cooler weather conditions, so the workers travel at night or early mornings.

“We’ve heard that rubber plantation workers from Mudon were arrested and soldiers extorted 300,000 Kyats from them. After hearing this news, workers/ owners dare not go to their plantation. They won’t go to their plantations until 4 am,” said a worker from Thanbyzayat.

The curfew has meant production rates and incomes have declined.

“I did rubber tapping in two plantations but now I can go to just one. We can’t work at night. When encountering soldiers on the way to our plantations, they stopped and checked us and shouted at me. So I don’t want to go to the plantations. So I gave up a plantation,” said a rubber tapper from Thanbyzayat.

Small and medium enterprise (SME’s) owners from Mon State are experiencing economic hardships since the coup.

“I don’t mention that big businesses don’t have impacts but SME’s are more challenged. Now there is no trade any more. I can’t predict how long this situation will go on but it’s pretty sure our business is broken down,” said an electric store owner from Thanbyzayat.

Businesses in Mon State were already suffering due to COVID-19 and now the

military coup makes things worse. Business owners hoped for a recovery when news of the vaccine was announced but the coup has destroyed those hopes.

“We’ve just run our salt farm but there is no trade. It’s also difficult for transportation. So there is nearly no buy and sale. If the situation continues, all business owners will surely be in trouble,” said a salt farm owner from Pa Nga village.

The coup has essentially ended the tourism business in Mon State with 200 tourist guides losing their jobs. Due to the COVID-19, the number of tourists to Mon State had already declined by 90% — now the unstable political condition has essentially ended the tourism business.

5) Ban on humanitarian aid

On March 15, 2021, two staff from a charity group in Kyaik Kha Mi, Thanbyzayat were arrested and charged with violating the curfew, also referred to as Act #188. They were transporting emergency patients to a hospital at night. They have been sentenced to one month imprisonment.

Volunteers who help provide emergency services are now afraid of transporting patients after 8 pm.

“Ban on the transporting emergency patients is unacceptable because it’s related to patients’ life. The authority should allow this. The court decision against the two staff from Kyaik Kha

Mi was unjust. After that incident, no one wants to transport patients at night,” said one resident from Thanbyzayat.

Bo Bo Win Emergency Rescues Teams based in Mawlaymine announced on April 2 they would no longer transport emergency patients to hospital at night.

Water donations have also been impacted by the military coup. Local villagers report that due to the unstable situation, donors who had previously provided financial support to provide clean water during hot summers are diminishing.

“As there was no water donor group, we have had to buy water for a long time. Each time this costs us about 3,500 or 4,000 Kyat. There were lots of water donors in the previous years so it didn’t cost us much. This year, we have to buy water till the rains come. It looks like we have to use extra money to buy water,” said a woman from Thanbyzayat who has to buy water for daily use.

Most of the townships in Mon State have a shortage of clean water every summer, but donation activities in the past helped villagers with access to water.

“The political situation is getting worse this year so we can’t manage to get donations of water. Also our members are no longer able to volunteer and we can’t organize them. So there is no water donation this year,” said a member of a water donation group in Mudon Township.

Young people and students are those most interested in doing charity work. Now they have been involved in protesting against the dictatorship.

The UN Human Rights Council expressed deep concerns regarding the brutal killings of peaceful protesters, restrictions on media agencies and cutting off WiFi and mobile internet services. The Council released a statement on March 24, 2021 indicating that all members condemn the military action of removing an elected civilian government.

News

MILITARY JUNTA COMMITTED TO IMPOSING NEWS BLACKOUT

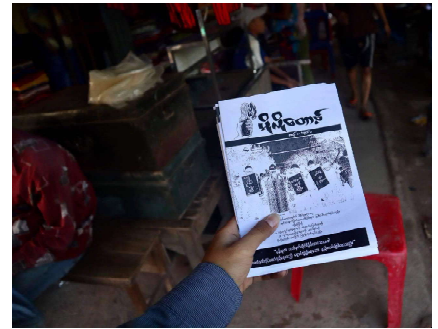


April 9, 2021

The military junta has been doing everything it can to prevent people’s access to news coverage of the dictatorship and pro-democracy movement. In addition to an internet media blackout, authorities have begun to seize PSI satellites which broadcast some news channels.

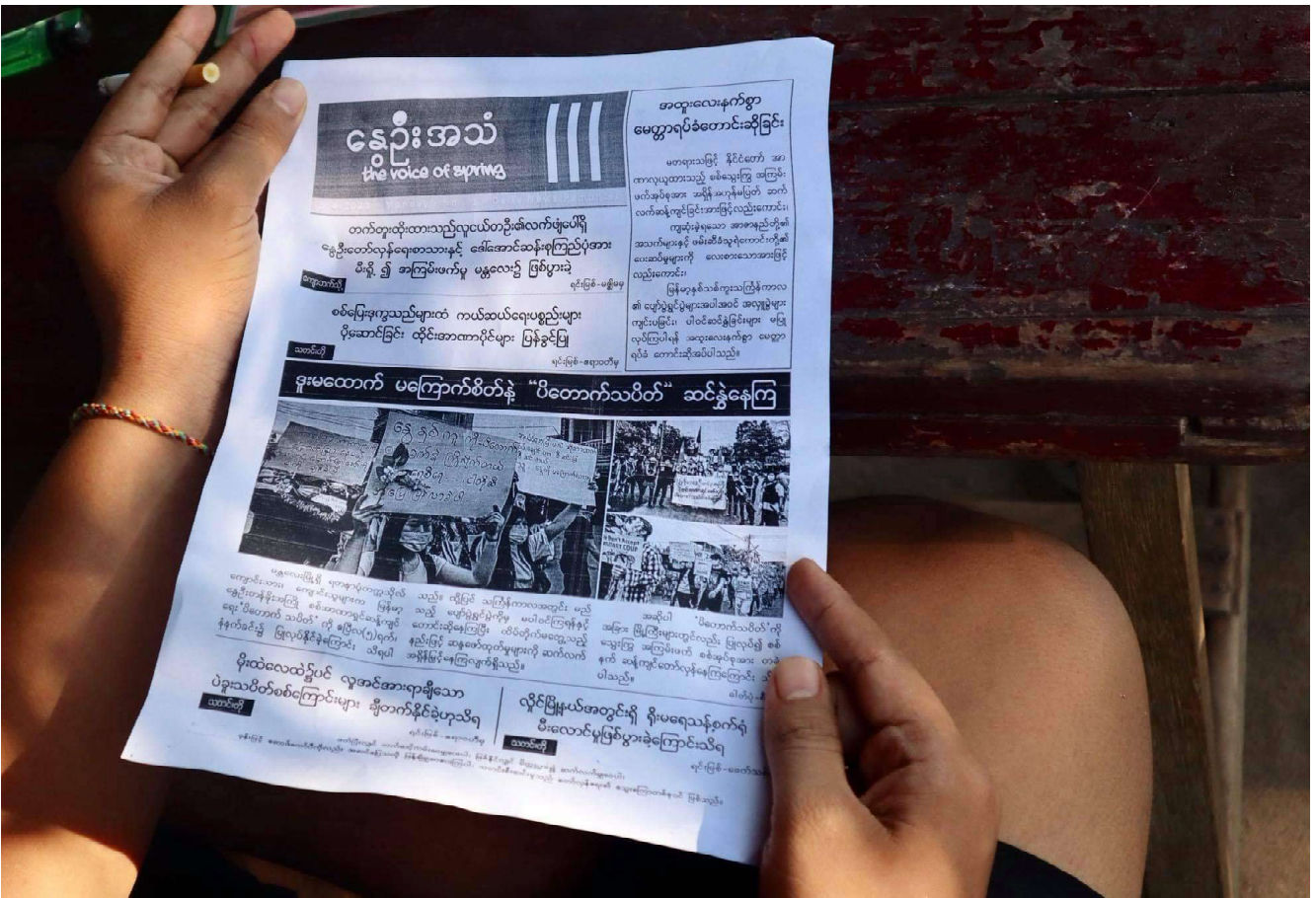
On April 8, 2021, police forces occupied electronic stores in Paung Township, Mon State and seized PSI satellites and associated devices. Authorities seized these satellites because they can capture the news channels of Mizzima and DVB media outlets. Both regularly broadcast updates of the pro-democracy movement.

In other townships across Burma, authorities forced people who had set up the satellites to remove them and send the devices to the Village/Ward Administration offices.



After the coup, military run media outlets such as MRTV-4 and the Myawaddy Channel have been broadcasting fake news and misleading information created by the junta.

In order to provide authentic news and information during the internet blackout, the Ye Student Union published newsletters called “Molotov” and “Spring Voice” and distributed them at markets in early April.



News

MILLIONS EXPECTED TO GO HUNGRY AS CONSEQUENCE OF MILITARY COUP



April 26, 2021

HURFOM: On April 22, 2021 the World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that 3-4million people across Burma will experience hunger within the next six months, due to combined impacts of the pandemic and the military coup.

“More and more poor people have lost their jobs and are unable to afford food. A concerted response is required

now to alleviate immediate suffering,” said WFP Myanmar Country Director, Stephen Anderson.

Commodity prices are rising sharply in Mon State due to the crisis. The price of the staples such as rice, cooking oil, chilli and onion are much higher than three months ago.

WFP is urging the traders within international markets to show support

to the people of Burma and stabilize commodity prices to counter a potential hunger crisis.

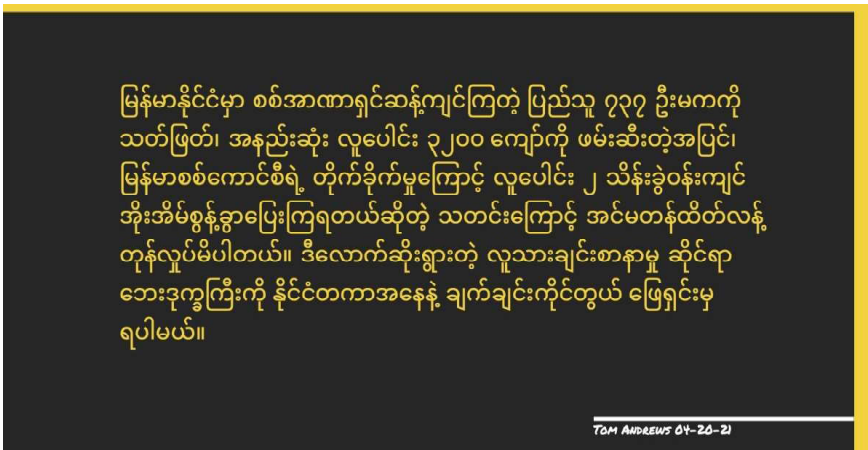
The Ministry of Commerce, Department of Trade announced on April 18 that cross-border trade of four basic foods, (rice, oil, chili and onions) would be banned effective May 1. Only imports will be permitted.

Further exacerbating factors include, the banking system which is not fully operational, and digital money services are difficult to access due to frequent shutdowns of the internet and mobile data services. In addition, transportation of goods to markets has been interrupted by nightly curfews and the military stopping vehicles.

Rubber plantations, salt farms, tourism, and SME’s, all critical parts of the Mon State economy have all been seriously impacted by the political crisis.



A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE FLEE THEIR HOMES DUE TO BRUTAL MILITARY CRACKDOWN



April 23, 2021

HURFOM: An alarming number of innocent civilians are fleeing their homes as the military and police forces kill and arrest peaceful protesters throughout Burma.

250,000 have now fled their homes. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma said he was shocked by this huge number.

“The world must act immediately to address this humanitarian catastrophe,” said UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews.

Many have fled to neighboring countries, particularly Thailand. Those in central Burma and not close to any bordering country have left their devastated villages and fled to forests and farms.

On April 20, 2021, 41 Karen domestic and international organizations released a statement urging the Thai government to give sanctuary to refugees fleeing Burma and to cease blocking humanitarian aid efforts.

According to an April 21 statement from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)’s, 739 people have been killed and 3,331 people arrested, charged or sentenced. Another 1,059 have been charged with a warrant.

News

MILITARY JUNTA MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR MASS KILLINGS



April 27, 2021

HURFOM: Since February 1, 2021 in what is being called the Burma Spring Revolution, more than 700 innocent people have been killed by the armed forces also known as the Tatmadaw.

General Yawd Serk, Acting Leader of the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST) on April 26, 2021 indicated that the leaders of the military junta must be held accountable for mass killings committed by their troops.

Armed forces of the junta have also brutally arrested, destroyed property

and robbed thousands of others.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), has documented that as of April 26, 745 people have been killed and 3,371 arrested or sentenced.

On March 27, the US Ambassador to Burma, Thomas Vajda said the security forces were murdering unarmed civilians, including children, — the very people they swore to protect and that this bloodshed was horrifying.

The Tatmadaw is notorious for impunity. In 2007, seven soldiers were

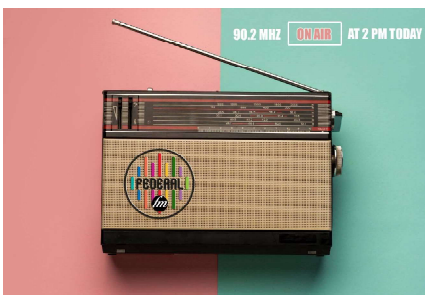
sentenced to jail for 10 years for their role in the mass murders in the Northern Arakan State. They were released from the prison just a year after their sentencing.

The Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) said they have collected roughly 18,000 pieces of evidence related to crimes committed by the military junta’s armed forces. The Committee is preparing to file a lawsuit against the junta both in Burma and with international halls of justice.

The military argues that the 2008 Constitution (which they wrote) includes Article 432, citing that no action conducted by the military during a state of emergency can be the basis for legal actions. However, the CRPH announced on March 31 the 2008 constitution was null and void (totally abolished) as a result of the coup.

On February 25, Antony Blinken, the USA’s Secretary of State, said the international community would continue to promote accountability and respond to violence directed against peaceful protesters in Burma.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION HAS A 30 YEAR HISTORY: NOW IN JEOPARDY



April 30, 2021

HURFOM: During the last three months, since the February 1 coup, the military junta has cut off mobile internet; limited Wifi services; abolished licenses of 5 news agencies; unjustly arrested reporters and filed lawsuits

against both journalists and media outlets. The result has been that the public right to information has hit rock bottom.

“It looks like we’re in 1988. We can’t read news and watch TV news. Radio is our only access to news. I had already bought one but can’t use it well. Now, I have no access to any news,” said a Ye resident.

Authorities have also seized PSI satellite devices which broadcast independent news channels.

“I have no access to news at all. I don’t know the political situation and what

happens with commodity prices. The authority has made the people blind (and deaf). The military junta don’t want us to know, to see and to hear anything. and they don’t want us to support the anti-coup movement,” said a young activist in Mawlamyine.

From February 1 to April 21, the military junta arrested 69 reporters— 39 of whom remain in detention.

In response to the clampdown on the free press, the young activists are publishing bulletins and newsletters and broadcasting updates on FM radio channels.

News

MUP SHOULD RECONSIDER COOPERATION WITH MILITARY COUNCIL



May 11, 2021

HURFOM: The Mon Unity Party (MUP), which represents the whole Mon population, has cooperated with the military council, however, Mon activists say, there is no obvious benefit to the Mon people.

"I think there must be "give and take". The Arakan party said this clearly. The Mon party must do the same. After cooperating with the military council, how much can we discuss our demands, and how can we achieve our goals? In my opinion, as of today, we've got nothing, but the military has been killing the people. So the MUP must

reconsider the cooperation, said one Mon leader.

The Arakan National Party (ANP), the ethnic political party that first decided to cooperate with the military council, announced on May 5 they would cease their cooperation with the military.

The ANP said the military council had not fulfilled their demands, and the cooperation with the council had not benefited Arakan people.

Social media posts from Mon people have also criticized the MUP for their cooperation with the military council. Critics argue the party should not serve under military rule.

Some party members said cooperation with the military was meant to create a cooperative government, but the MUP never announced what they hoped to achieve from such cooperation.

The MUP holds one position in the State Administrative Council and one position in the Mon State Administrative Council.

MILITARY JUNTA TO OPEN SCHOOLS BUT SUSPENDS MORE THAN 3,000 TEACHERS IN MON STATE



May 18, 2021

HURFOM: The military junta has been trying to open schools for the 2021-22 academic year but it also suspended 3,181 schoolteachers and educational staff including 13 headmasters and headmistresses in Mon State.

The Department of Basic Education released detailed news of the suspensions.

They included, 579 schoolteachers and staff from Kyaik Hto, 530 from Thaton, 441 from Paung, 112 from Chaung Zone, 338 from Mawlamyine, 219 from Mudon, 332 from Kyaikmayaw and 617 from Ye Townships were all suspended on May 7. On May 12, 4 high school headmasters/mistresses and 9 middle school headmasters/mistresses were also suspended.

The Department which is controlled by the junta, said the teachers were absent from their duty without a strong reason.

Those who have been suspended must appear at their education offices on May 17 for interdepartmental hearing.

Students and the Student Unions expressed respect to the school teachers, who have stood with the people and refused to serve under the military junta.



News

Two Mon political parties join meeting with UEC



May 27, 2021

HURFOM: On May 21, 2021, the Union Election Commission (UEC) which is controlled by the military junta held a meeting with political parties in Naypyidaw.

There were at least 23 political parties represented in the Assembly of the Union, and another 42 unrepresented parties. In addition there are another 63 defunct political parties.

62 political parties across the country attended the meeting including two Mon political parties – the Mon Unity Party (MUP) and the Mon Woman’s Party.

Following the coup a previous meeting of political parties had been held on the 26th of February which attracted just 53 party representatives.

The UEC said they invited all official political parties including the National League for Democracy, that had won the 2020-election, but most denied the invitation.

The Arakan National Party (ANP) and the Kachin State People Party (KSPP) who had attended the first meeting refused to meet the UEC a second time.

The purpose of the second meeting was to discuss a “Proportional Representation System” in the coming elections.

Approximately 80% of the political parties that have met with the military junta controlled UEC have never won an electoral seat.



News

AUNG SAN BRIDGE TO BE RENAMED BY MILITARY JUNTA



June 1, 2021

HURFOM: General Aung San Bridge (Belu Island) located in Chaung Zone Township, Mon State will return to its original name “Than Lwin Bridge (Chaung Zone)”.

“According to the USDP (Union Solidarity and Development Party), Aung San bridge is to be renamed. The

new name will be “Than Lwin Bridge (Chaung Zone)”, said a Chaung Zone resident who is close to high ranking members of the USDP.

When the bridge was originally being constructed it was named “Than Lwin Bridge (Chaung Zone)” but the National League for Democracy (NLD) government renamed the bridge to commemorate

General Aung San on his birthday of February 13, 2017.

At that time, NLD lawmaker, Mi Kun Chan submitted a proposal to the Pyithu Hluttaw that the bridge name should be changed to honor the Burma independence hero, General Aung San, and the Hluttaw approved the proposal.

Tens of thousands of Mon people opposed renaming of the bridge but the NLD government would not back down from their decision.

At that time, President U Win Myint led the Pyithu Hluttaw. He has since been detained by the military junta.

“We, Chaung Zoners, like the name “Rehmonnya Bridge” but the military junta has changed the name so it’s up to them. I don’t want to add anything,” said a resident from Chaung Zone.

Dr Banyar Aung Moe, who is with the Mon Unity Party (MUP) and is serving as a member of the State Military Council, promised to discuss the bridge naming issue with the military junta. He plans to point out that the Mon people do not like the proposed name.



News

MON PEOPLE’S POLITICAL DESTINY DOES NOT REST IN THE NAME GIVEN TO A BRIDGE



June 4, 2021

HURFOM: The “General Aung San Bridge (Belu Island)” that connects Mawlamyine and Belu Island in Chaung Zone, Mon State was opened by the National League for Democracy (NLD) government on May 9, 2017. Now, the military junta has changed its name to “Than Lwin Bridge (Chaung Zone)” with a reopening ceremony on June 1, 2021.

The leader of the military council, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, joined the ceremony alongside Dr Banyar Aung Moe, the MUP member serving on the State military council.

When the NLD named the bridge “General Aung San Bridge (Belu Island)”, the Mon people strongly opposed the name choice. They wanted the bridge to be named “Rehmonnya Bridge” or “Than Lwin Bridge (Chaung Zone)” which was its original name when the bridge construction began.

“I don’t welcome that the military council has changed the bridge’s name. I’m not excited about that. We’ve continuously opposed the military dictatorship,” said a resident from Chaung Zone Township.

The NLD government changed the bridge’s name without listening to the people’s voice and now, the military

junta has renamed the bridge for political purposes.

“I think the bridge’s name has been politically manipulated. I don’t think the junta changed the name due to the request of the MUP (Mon National Party). They already had plans to use the Mon people for their political purpose,” said another resident from Chaung Zone Township.

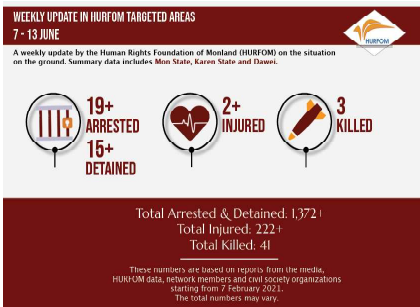
Some members of the Mon community have voiced optimism about the name change.

“It’s good that the bridge’s name has been changed. One of the desires of the Mon people is fulfilled,” said another resident of Chaung Zone Township.

Others are critical of the gesture. **“I want to ask all Mon people if we’re just satisfied with what the military has given to us. All Mon people must unite at this time,”** said a resident of Chaung Zone Township.

Dr Aung Naing Oo, the former Deputy Speaker of the Mon State Parliament, wrote on his social media, **“Our Mon people’s political destiny isn’t just in the name of a bridge. It’s to create a nation with mutual respect and mutual sympathy/understanding and to create a political environment that assures all ethnic minority rights.”**

WEEKLY UPDATE IN HURFOM TARGETED AREAS (7-13 JUNE 2021)



June 14, 2021

HURFOM, Mawlamyine: In HURFOM target areas, the human rights situation remains of great concern. Fieldworkers continue to document as best as they

can, given the extreme risks and limitations faced. Confiscation and destruction of properties is ongoing. This week, in addition to monumental, historical statues being destroyed in Karen State, there were 15 mobile phones and five motorcycles also taken by the junta.

Of those arrested in our weekly tally, two were defence lawyers of former Karen State Chief Minister in Hpa-An and of a 14 year old boy and 8 high school students from Mawlamyine. Those killed include a woman

candidate from the Mon Unity Party and 2 Long Lone villagers.

According to HURFOM data, this week there was a considerable amount of sentencing of young protesters and activists. The majority were charged with Section 505 (c) of the Penal Code. Meanwhile, other young activists were arrested by the junta and their families denied information about their whereabouts.

Bombings were the site of seven bomb denotations with attacks allegedly targeting schools and government administrative departments. Civilians have reason to be fearful of the bombings and ongoing junta violence.

News

MUP CANDIDATE ASSASSINATED: MON ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED THIS WAS AN ACT OF POLITICAL TERRORISM



June 11, 2021

HURFOM: On June 8, 2021, Mi Wai Thi Phyo, a Amyotha Hluttaw candidate with the Mon Unity Party (MUP) from Kyarinnsaikyi Township, Karen State was assassinated and died in the evening at the Three Pagoda Pass General Hospital.

Numerous Mon organizations released statements expressing sorrow for the death of Mi Wai Thi Phyo.

The MUP and other Mon organizations believe the assassination may have been an act of terrorism and urged others not to create ethnic conflict.

On June 9, the MUP strongly condemned any acts of terrorism that create ethnic conflict and regional instability among all ethnic peoples living in Mon region.

Mon Against Dictatorship (MAD) another organization seeking justice for Mi Wai Thi Phyo assassination also released a statement.

"We strongly condemn all kinds of terrorism that including assassination to spur ethnic conflict during the era of political crisis and revolution against the dictatorship," stated the MAD on June 9.

Dr Aung Naing Oo, a popular Mon political leader and former Deputy Speaker of Mon State Parliament, posted on his social media that it was totally awful if the assassination of Mi Wai Thi Phyo was political motivated.

The MUP and many Mon organizations are demanding justice.

The New Mon State Party, the ethnic armed organization of the Mon people, released a statement on June 9 stating the NMSP must investigate and hold the terrorists accountable.



TATMADAW CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT RINGS HOLLOW



April 3, 2021

HURFOM: The Burmese military (aka Tatmadaw) launched an attack on the Kyouk Zouk Base, Brigade No. 1 of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA/

KNU) in Thaton Township, Mon State at 7:25 pm on April 2nd.

On March 31, the office of the Commander in Chief of the Tatmadaw had announced that in order to advance peace, the military would stop all military activity during the month of April 2021, except in cases when the security of the State or its bureaucracy is in jeopardy or under attack. The announcement of a qualified ceasefire, was not well received by the Kachin

Independence Army (KIA), who noted the military had been accelerating its operation into their controlled area even before the announcement.

On March 30, 2021, the Tatmadaw informed the Border Committee of Mae Sai in Chaing Mai, Thailand they would launch attacks on all bases of the Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) located near the Thai-Burma border.

A Tatmadaw airstrike also resulted in 20 civilian deaths near the KNU Brigade No. 3 and Brigade No. 5 controlled areas. It is estimated that roughly 12,000 fled to Thailand.

News

MOHA BEGINS INVESTIGATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES



June 15, 2021

HURFOM: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) has begun investigating political parties. Last week representatives from MOHA visited the headquarters of the Mon Unity Party (MUP) in Myine Tharyar Ward, Mawlamyine and requested a list of Central Executive Committee members.

On May 24, the Union Election Commission (UEC) formed by the military council sent a letter to the MOHA requesting they open an investigation of political parties and to look for unlawful associations or any misconduct that can be used to abolish the registration of political parties.

Some political parties were informed in advance of the investigation, while some were surprised.

“The Bureau of Special Investigation (SBI) and Special Branch (SP) visited the headquarters of the MUP and requested the names and the biographies of the CEC members. That’s all. They said nothing else,” said Nai Tala Nyi, a spokesperson for the MUP.

The MOHA together with the officials from the General Administration Department also investigated a Rangoon based ethnic political party, the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) on June 10.

The MOHA also wants to know if any political parties and their members have connections with Committee Representing for Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), the National Unity Government (NUG) and/or the People Defense Front (PDF).

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GUNSHOT NEAR SCHOOL FRIGHTENS PARENTS

June 16, 2021

HURFOM: In the evening of June 14, 2021, two individuals were helping students cross the road in front of the No. #2 Basic Education Middle School in Aung Mitta Ward, Ye, Mon State, when gunfire was heard. Moments later one person lay dead on the road.

The deceased person was a prominent person in the ward and also a former soldier.

A resident from Aung Mitta Ward, described the incident, **“When coming to pick up his daughter, he was helping a student cross the road. He was shot in his temple and passed away. Another person helping the students was the Ward Administrator and he was injured in his arm.”**

Gunfire and explosions in communities have occurred regularly since the February 1st coup.

In the first week of June, there was an explosion at the General Administration Office of Aung Mitta Ward and in the third week of May a bomb was thrown at the No. #2 Basic Education Middle School.

“At the beginning of the school year, a bomb was thrown at the No. #2 Basic Education Middle School. But the bomb didn’t explode. After that the parents were afraid and didn’t send their children to school. The school had to be closed for four or five days (including weekend days),” said one parent.

Some parents withdrew their children from school.

“Parents are afraid to send their children to school due to the current condition. Shootings have occurred in the school area and it isn’t the first time. So I decided not to send my daughter to school this academic year,” said another parent.

Since March 15, the security forces of the military junta have been based in more than 60 schools and universities across Burma. Bomb explosions and gun attacks are now taking place more frequently because security forces are based at schools.

UNICEF has stated that placing security forces in educational buildings is a violation of children’s rights and seriously impacts any learning environment.

“Today (the day after the gunshot), half of the students haven’t come to school. The upper grade students still went to school while nearly all of the lower grade students missed their classes. The police forces have guarded the school at the moment,” said a Ye resident

News

KYARINNSEIKYI RESIDENTS WORRY AS MILITARY TENSION GROWS



June 8, 2021

HURFOM: On June 4, 2021, armed clashes took place between the Karen Border Guard Force (BGF) and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The BGF is an ethnic armed group that has a long history of cooperation with the military junta.

Fighting between the two parties took place at a police station in the Kalae-Tagun Daing village, in Kyarinnseikyi township

Villagers were frightened by the conflict and some have fled. According to the local sources, grocery stores and shops were closed as owners prepared to leave the community.

“After hearing the gun shots, lots of military vehicles marched to Kalae-Tagun Daing. Some villagers fled their village. The shops were closed and the villagers were busy packing,” said an owner of a motorbike repair shop in Tagun Daing village.

Heavy weapons were being deployed and some buildings were partially damaged. The number of casualties and/or injuries is still unknown.

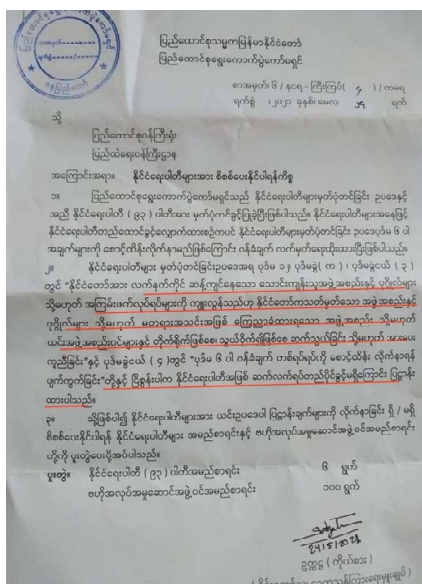
Both sides have requested military reinforcements.

“Karen has reinforced their military forces in Nan Toon Tun village. Both sides are very close now. The armed clash is ready to break out if one side takes a wrong step,” said a villager from the nearby village of Nan Toon Tun.

Nearby community members have also responded by leaving their homes and closing shops.

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JUNTA CONTROLLED UEC, TO ABOLISH POLITICAL PARTIES OPPOSING THE MILITARY



June 4, 2021

HURFOM: On May 24, 2021, the military junta controlled Union Election Commission (UEC) sent a letter

to the Ministry of Home Affairs informing them that if a political party connects or provides assistance to any “terrorist group or any unlawful association”, that disqualifies their standing as a political party.

The UEC is directing the Ministry to check if the political parties breach these new restrictions.

The letter emerged after the Chair of the UEC said on May 21 that the commission would abolish the National League for Democracy (NLD).

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi responded via her lawyer, saying the party was formed by the people of Burma so that if the people exist, the party would exist.

It has been evident since the first meeting of the UEC, that a targeting of

the NLD and others was emerging. At that first meeting political parties supporting the military, urged the UEC to punish the NLD.

Dr Aye Maung, Chair of the Arakan Front Party, who attended the second UEC meeting said the Commission has the authority under the 2008 Constitution, to dissolve political part

*terrorist group
or any unlawful
association*



News

MILITARY AIRFIELD PROJECT ON KALAGOKE ISLAND RESUMES: LOCAL PLANTATIONS SEIZED



June 17, 2021

HURFOM: According to local sources, construction of a military airfield project which has long been suspended on Kalagoke Island, Ye Township, Mon State resumed recently.

It appears that work has begun again and now, some local plantations are being impacted.

“There has already been a lot of land leveling. It’s between the Upper Port and Middle Port villages. Those who are close to the military said it’s for the

military airfield,” said a resident from Kalagoke island.

Local plantations between the Upper Port and Middle Port villages have been damaged as a result of land leveling.

“The plantations were damaged. I don’t know if the owners will get compensation or not. But we haven’t heard about any negotiation as of today. The owners hope they will get some compensation. But on one knows what happens next,” said the Kalagoke resident.

On June 24, 2014, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Defense, General Kyaw Nyunt said in the parliament that 3,525 acres of land in Kalagoke Island was seized and handed over to the Mawrawaddy Navy.

The Mon State government had planned to construct a deep seaport off the island, and establish a dedicated fishing zone. Plans also included zones on the island for industrial and special economic development, residential areas and a management zone that would be fully controlled by the Mon State government.

News

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES NOT FUNCTIONING UNDER MILITARY JUNTA



သံသယလူနာများ ထားရှိရန်အတွက် သံဖြူဇရပ်တွင် Quarantine Center တစ်ခု ဖြင်ဆင်နေပုံ (Photo: ThanZaw Uo)

une 26, 2021

HURFOM: Mon State has been experiencing an increase of COVID-19 cases. As of June 23 there have been more than 200 cases reported.

Providing care to patients afflicted with the virus has become increasingly challenging due an inadequate number of healthcare staff.

“Now there are no doctors and assistants in hospitals, so there is no health service for the people. If the COVID-19 infection rate increases, people will be helpless,” said a resident from Ye Township.

An official with the Mon State Public Health Department indicated that they would try their best to respond but needed more help from health officials.

“We’ve tried our best with the current health staff and we also cooperate with the medical team in Ten Township Ward of the Mawlamyine University. It’s okay now but if the number of patients increases, we will need help from health officials and staff in Mawlamyine. I know they’re willing to help us,” said an official from the Mon State Public Health Department.

Most health officials and staff have refused to go to their workplaces, due to the military coup, though many continue to provide assistance at

monasteries. However, the impact has left public hospitals short staffed.

“Some health staff came back to the workplace but not enough. The public health departments have prepared centers for COVID-19 patients. We could do more before as we had enough volunteers and staff. If we want to restore the health system like before, we have to convince the health officials and staff to come back to their workplaces,” said an official from an emergency rescue team in Mawlamyine.

The military junta has tried to present to the world that they are in control and are providing public health control measures. However, Reuters News agency reported that in mid June they arrested the former head of Myanmar Covid-19 immunization program, Htar Htar Lin under dubious charges of high treason for allegedly colluding with opponents of the military.

Myanmar’s healthcare system and coronavirus prevention measures have collapsed since the army seized power on Feb. 1 and overthrew elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose government had successfully stopped two waves of the virus.

The Mawlamyine General Hospital is accepting and treating COVID-19 patients. Isolation Ward #1 has about

40 critically-ill patients and Ward #3 has 220 patients.

“We’ve advocated for people on our website to take measures to prevent the spread of the virus.. We’ve also done a “Mask Campaign” in Mawlamyine. We’ve patrolled wards and villages providing stickers promoting “COVID-19 awareness”, said the emergency team official.

Members of the public dispute this claim, saying there has been no education about “COVID-19 awareness” on the ground, and people are not following the public health rules and regulations.

“Now, people don’t fear the COVID-19. No one follows health measures. They don’t wear masks when going outside. They don’t wash their hands. There is no enforcement of wearing masks and washing hands in restaurants and markets,” said a Ye resident.

In Thanbyuzayat, as of June 22, there were more than 60 COVID-19 cases, and parents are not sending their children to schools as they are afraid of the risk of infection.

“The political condition is bad and the spread of the COVID-19 is also high in Thanbyuzayat. I’m afraid my child will be infected. So I don’t send them to school,” said one parent from Thanbyuzayat.

To stop the third wave of the COVID-19, people must follow public health rules and regulations exactly.

“Consequences are worse than the disease. So to avoid the impacts of the COVID-19, every individual must exercise protections.. Prevention is the best option. Please wear masks when going outside and avoid crowds. If the infection rate declines, restrictions will be loosened and making a livelihood will be possible. That’s why I want people to follow public health measures,” said a rescue team member.

Information on HURFOM and Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers

Dear Readers,

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995, by a group of young Mon people, The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- Monitoring the human rights situation in Mon territory and other areas in southern Burma
- Protecting and promoting internationally recognized human rights in Burma,

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM produces the monthly “Mon Forum” newsletters. If publication is delayed it is because we are waiting to confirm information, and it comes with our heartfelt apologies.

We encourage you to write to us if you have feedback or if you know someone who you think would like to receive the newsletter.

Please email or mail a name and address to:

HURFOM, P.O. Box 35, Sangkhalburi Post Office,
Kanchanaburi, 71240 Thailand

E-mail: info@rehmonnya.org

Website: <http://www.rehmonnya.org>

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

MILITARY JUNTA FAILS TO DELIVER, LEAVING FEWER RESCUE AND VOLUNTEER TEAMS ABLE TO PROVIDE COVID-19 ASSISTANCE



June 26, 2021

HURFOM: The third wave of COVID-19 has hit Burma. The impacts are severe in Mon State, significantly reducing the capacity of local rescue and charity teams to provide assistance.

Prior to the coup, the civilian government was providing public education, dissemination of COVID-19 prevention and control measures.

However, the military junta have proven to be very weak in doing those activities.

“During the third wave (of COVID-19), the number of volunteer teams has been reduced. That’s because the military oppressed these teams after the coup. Most rescue and charity teams had to stop their activities. Now, just a few teams are left to provide COVID-19 related assistance,” said a member of a local rescue team in Mudon.

The prevention, control and treatment program of COVID-19 has been in a state of chaos since the coup, even quarantine centers are not operating well.

“The military junta can’t deliver the prevention and control measures needed to slow the disease in the way that the NLD government did. Before, the wards or villages were locked down after the detection of COVID-19 but now it’s different. The authority just restricts the home of the COVID-19 patient. So it’s difficult to control the spread of the virus,” said a volunteer who has provided COVID-19 assistance in Thanbyzayat.

The junta has not educated the people and is not sharing information. They are proving to be incapable of prevention and control of the disease.

There is growing criticism of the lack of public health education, and that quarantine centers are not operating well. These failures are fueling the spread of the virus.

ANOTHER CEC MEMBERS PREPARES RESIGNATION AS MUP CONTINUES TO COOPERATE WITH THE MILITARY COUNCIL



June 13, 2021

HURFOM: The Mon Unity Party (MUP) is planning to extend its cooperation with the military council despite having no idea what benefits might accompany their cooperation.

As a result another central executive committee (CEC) member has indicated their resignation is pending.

“I’m about to resign because the party has no concrete plan about cooperating with the military council. To cooperate, you must have a plan to get some benefits from the cooperation. Now, the party has no plan, so cooperation is meaningless. That’s why I’m thinking about resigning from the party,” said a CEC member of the MUP.

The MUP has yet to release their road map regarding cooperation with the military council.

The CEC meeting of the MUP decided to join the military council on February 6. That decision was confirmed by the central executive on March 16. As a result 19 CEC members,

15 EC members and about 50 Township-level members resigned from the party.

Many of the members who resigned formed a “Mon Affairs Union” to work independently to advance the interests of the Mon people.

The decision to join the military council has provoked a great deal of criticism from the Mon people.

A CEC member of the MUP who earlier resigned from the party said, *“The party just decided to cooperate with the military but they have no plan. They haven’t decided how far they would go with the military and they have not analyzed the outcome of their cooperation. Their decision was unacceptable so I decided to resign.”*

Other MUP members who remain sitting on the military council include Dr Banyar Aung Moe. He has said that his cooperation with the military was to form a “cooperative government” and to advance Mon affairs as much as he could.

HURFOM

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